



# HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

An electronic newsletter in support of public safety services in Montana

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## PSSB Weekly Highlights

- NEPA applications have been submitted to the State Administrative Agency (SAA) for the Antelope Butte, Belle Prairie and Hathaway sites in eastern Montana.
- Aviat Networks completed final punch-list items on the Northern Tier microwave project.
- PSSB and Yellowstone County Sheriff representatives met in Helena on July 27 to finalize the PSIC grant re-obligation process.
- On July 26, Flathead County Commissioners notified the Montana Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) of their intention to accept the Border Interoperability Demonstration Project (BIDP) grant award.

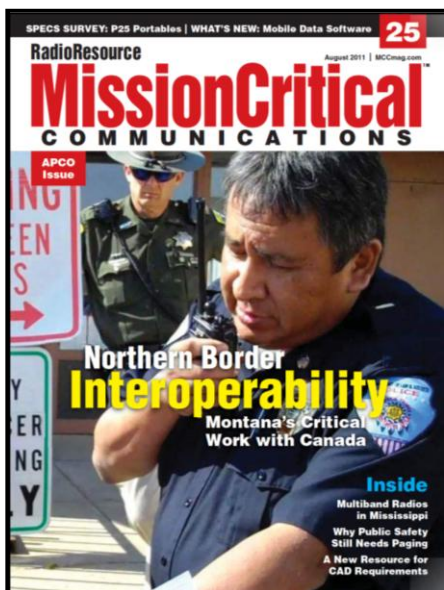
## Northern Border Interoperability: Montana's Critical Work with Canada

By E. Wing Spooner [espooner@mt.gov](mailto:espooner@mt.gov)

An article about Montana's plans to use a \$4 million Homeland Security Border Interoperability Demonstration Project (BIDP) grant appears in the August issue of Radio Resource's *MissionCritical Communications* monthly magazine. The story covers

Montana's plans to improve mutual aid resources, mobile data capabilities, sites and training for its border network.

Featured on the cover is a photo taken by Ian Marquand, Public Affairs and Outreach Consultant, during a



Northern Alliance functional communications exercise held in Wolf Point last June. Lt. Jim Summers, Fort Peck Tribal Law and Justice Dept., is featured prominently with Montana Highway Patrol Officer Ross Tuggle, who is stationed in Scobey, in the background.

You may access the issue at this link: <http://digital.olivesoftware.com/olive/ODE/MissionCriticalArchive/> and use the word "HAM" for both the logon ID and password. Or, sign up to receive your own monthly electronic version at this site: <https://rai.magserv.com/cgi-bin/subscribe?qt=new>.

The Public Safety Services Bureau is grateful for the opportunity to help tell the story about Montana's commitment to the success of a statewide interoperable radio system that will meet the growing needs of first responders along its 545-mile border with Canada.

## Milestones Reached in Grant Re-Obligation Process

By E. Wing Spooner [espooner@mt.gov](mailto:espooner@mt.gov)

As promised, the *Heard Across Montana* is pleased to report on important milestones reached in Montana's federal grant de-and re-obligation process. Readers will recall that with the dissolution of Interoperability Montana (IM), an association of governments that had been a sub-grantee of the state's interoperable grants, funds had to be de-obligated back to Montana's Disaster and Emergency Services (DES) Office of Homeland Security Grants (OHSG). Then, a procedure had to be developed for the orderly transition of grants and contracts formerly held by IM. (To learn more about IM history and transition plans, visit <http://interop.mt.gov/default.mcp.x>.)

Butch Renders, Richland County's DES Coordinator, worked with Public Safety Services Bureau (PSSB) staff to write comprehensive application forms to re-obligate Dept. of Homeland Security (DHS) FY07 and FY08 grant funds to Richland County. After approval from county commissioners, the five-member Executive Management Transition Team, which the Governor appointed in June, reviewed and approved the applications. Early this week, DES issued new award letters naming Richland County as the sub-grantee of these two grants.

The FY07 grant funds are being used to

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construct the Antelope Butte site in Richland County, which will serve as a critical link for the statewide microwave network backbone by connecting the new eastern zone 2 controller to the master zone controller located in Lewis and Clark County. The site also will provide critical coverage needed for both Richland and Roosevelt Counties.

The re-obligation of FY08 grant funds will ensure that the Government Hill site infrastructure is completed as well as Phase I of the Eastern microwave build-out. An additional microwave hop from Government Hill to the Hathaway site also is planned. The project also will allow several existing trunked sites to be connected to the zone 2 controller to achieve a better balance of load sharing by more equally distributing network ports at each zone controller.

Richland County will be managing the bulk of these projects not only for its own benefit, but also for the benefit of the surrounding counties of Custer, Dawson and Roosevelt. Richland County Commissioners signed the award letters on July 26, marking the first major milestone in this grant transition process. We commend Richland County for its leadership and foresight in helping to continue the goal of completing the statewide microwave backbone and allowing all local, state, tribal and federal agencies access to this equipment so as to improve operable and interoperable communications around the state.

## Invitation to “Enabling Interoperability” Workshop on Sept. 15

By E. Wing Spooner [espooner@mt.gov](mailto:espooner@mt.gov)

The Wireless Innovation Forum is extending an invitation to attend the Forum’s “Enabling Interoperability” workshop in Montreal, Canada on Sept. 15. Interested parties also are invited to participate in the Forum’s 70<sup>th</sup> working meeting, which will be held on Sept. 12-14. The meeting will include working sessions advancing the Forum’s 2011 operations plan in support of commercial, public safety, satellite communications and international tactical radio communities.

The workshop will explore how various technologies can be utilized to improve communications between services, agencies or jurisdictions that have historically been hampered by incompatible radio systems operating on different protocols or frequencies. The workshop will cross commercial, defense and public safety domains,

and will include a look at both requirements and regulations.

The meeting will be held at the Hyatt Regency Montreal. To register for the Interoperability Workshop and to learn more, visit <http://groups.winnforum.org/p/cm/ld/fid=171>. The early bird registration and hotel rate deadline is Aug. 20.



Last week, Dunne Communication crews deployed to the Miller Peak site to move the microwave dish facing the Cominco site. They realigned both ends of the path to obtain optimum signal.

## Upcoming Meetings

- **Thurs., Aug. 4**  
Northern Tier Consortium  
Havre • 11:00 am – 1:30 pm  
Hill County Detention Center Courtroom Mtg. Area  
1450 2<sup>nd</sup> St. West
- **Thurs., Sept. 15**  
“Enabling Interoperability” Workshop  
Montreal, Canada  
Hyatt Regency Montreal, 1255 Jeanne-Mance St.  
<http://groups.winnforum.org/p/cm/ld/fid=171>